

General Delivery
Moose Factory
POL 1W0

Mr. Alok Mukherjee
A/Chief Commissioner
OHRC.

5 February 1993

Dear Sir,

Your predecessor wrote three times to subsequent provincial Ministers of Health on this issue, and there has been no action. I'm writing to ask if you could step up the approach.

The issue is the ongoing abuse of persons whose central nervous system dysfunction is caused by environmental sensitivities. The Thomson report on sensitivities in 1985 lists central nervous system symptoms of environmental sensitivities including anxiety, depression, hallucinations, mood swings, learning and behaviour disabilities, and suicide.

Several studies, both recent and dating back decades, recommend screening persons for sensitivities when their symptoms are ambiguous. This was recommended in the Ashford-Miller report, for instance, which won a Macedo Award from the World Health Organization. This report's recommendation is based on the idea that if you don't screen out persons with sensitivities before embarking on "normal" psychiatric treatments, you may contribute to the illness, and greatly complicate efforts to find sensitivities later.

These recommendations are "fully supported" by Health and Welfare officials, according to past federal health minister Perrin Beatty. Mr. Bouchard, the current federal minister, says that environmental sensitivities and psychiatric illness are symptom based and could have similar manifestations. He too supports screening in ambiguous cases.

The same recommendation was put forward by the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office in 1989.

It's not being done. Unfortunately, victims of this abuse do not know themselves who they are and therefore cannot lay a complaint about discrimination in the provision of a service.

Sincerely,

Chris Brown
Ottawa Branch President
Allergy and Environmental Health Association